

Grantee Partnership Project Grantee Survey Results

Executive Summary — FY 2009 Year-Ending



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I. Background and Methodology

The Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) in Partnership with the Rasmuson Foundation, Mental Health Trust, Mat-Su Health Foundation, and the Foraker Group initiated the Grantee Partnership Project (GPP) to improve its grantmaking operations and to strengthen the relationship between DHSS and its grantee partners. To evaluate the project's progress within the Department, DHSS elected to conduct a survey of DHSS Grantees (current and past) to:

- Obtain a measure of GPP knowledge and perception to-date.
- Gather information that can be used to identify and shape future GPP activities.
- Measurement against the baseline evaluation from FY2008, which will assist DHSS measure future needs and improvements.

The survey was conducted over a 10 day period, September 11, 2009 through September 21, 2009. Surveys were distributed by DHSS to 1,522 DHSS grantees. A total of 193 substantive responses were received, resulting in a response rate of 12.6%.

Of the 193 participants that responded to the survey, 93.6% of them received a grant from DHSS in FY2009.

Grantee staff response by position:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------|
| • Executive Directors | 23.8% |
| • Program Managers | 29.1% |
| • Financial Managers | 11.6% |
| • Other | 35.4% |

Other positions:

- Clinical Directors
- President of the Board of Directors
- Deputy Directors
- Grant Technicians
- Accountants
- Controllers
- Local Administrators

The length of employment for those who participated in the survey:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------|
| • Five years or more | 54.2% |
| • One to five years | 34.2% |
| • One year or less | 11.6% |

Division within DHSS that the surveyor had grants with:

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- Division of Behavioral Health 52.7%
- Office of Children’s Services 31.4%
- Division of Senior Disability Services 30.2%
- Division of Public Health 23.7%
- Division of Public Assistance 16.6%
- Division of Juvenile Justice 16.6%
- Division of Health Care Services 7.1%
- Participants who did not receive a grant 5.3%

II. Project Knowledge and Information Sources

Familiarity with Grantee Partnership Project:

One objective of the survey was to assess the familiarity with the Grantee Partnership Project. Analysis of the survey responses shows that DHSS has been very successful in making grantees aware of the project.

- Very Familiar 20.1%
- Somewhat Familiar 66.9%
- Not Familiar 11.8%
- Other 1.2%

While it is encouraging that 87% surveyed had knowledge of the project, DHSS still had 11.8% of the surveyed grantee acknowledge that they had no communications pertaining to the GPP, while 1.2% of the surveyed had identified “other”.

How did grantees learned about the Grantee Partnership Project?

- Streamline Newsletter 35.5%
- DHSS staff communication 18.3%
- Past Logic Model Training 12.5%
- Internal grantee staff communication 11.2%
- Directly involved with the project 8.3%

Comments:

- I am a former grantee and served on the Partnership Team originally.
- Project is an excellent idea. Professional, pragmatic.
- This question about how we learned about the Partnership Project is confusing because I cannot remember. Communication has occurred at a number of levels including e-mails, Streamline, Logic Model Training, ongoing correspondence, and with the pilot project on grant renewals for multi-year grants. I would have to have lived and worked under a rock to have missed hearing about it. :-)

III. Performance Based Outcomes Efforts

Logic Model Training:

Due to the tremendous amount of free Performance Based Outcome through a Logic Model Training offered statewide over the past year, (Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Ketchikan, Sitka, Kenai, Bethel, Nome, Kotzebue, Barrow, Dillingham, Kodiak, and Wasilla) DHSS wanted to collect information pertaining to the success and usefulness of the training in assisting grantees improve their programs as well as responding to DHSS grant solicitations.

Access to Logic Model Training:

- Yes 43.4%
- No 15.7%
- Somewhat 6.0%
- Don't Know 34.9%

Comments:

- Limited local availability. Attended the session at a grantee meeting in Anchorage.
- It was a great training and should be offered again.
- We appreciated the training specifically for youth courts.
- We attended in Anchorage at UYCA Directors Meeting.
- Community too small.

It's clear that DHSS needs to enhance its advertising efforts and reach out to more communities with multiple trainings for future Logic Model training.

Attended Logic Model training:

- Did attend Logic Model training 35.1%
- Did not attend Logic Model training 64.9%

DHSS sought to find out why grantees did not attend the free Logic Model training, especially if it was available in their community:

Comments:

- I did not know that it was being offered in Fairbanks, nor what it was about.
- Another employee attended the training on behalf of the agency.
- DHSS doesn't come out to rural Alaska!
- I attended this training the year prior.

The following are recommendations on how DHSS might improve efforts to ensure access to future Logic Model trainings:

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- Maintain an accurate, up to date distribution list for all Grantees and ensure all Logic Model opportunities are directly forwarded to all grantees.
- Continue to publish and distribute the “Streamline” newsletter.
- Consider highlighting the project more prominently on the DHSS website.
- Encourage DHSS staff to include future training opportunities in grantee meetings, conferences, etc.
- Suggest that “Streamline” newsletter be posted on grantees bulletin boards.

Improved knowledge of Logic Models:

The survey clearly showed that grantees feel they have more knowledge and understanding of Logic Models.

- Yes 71.7%
- No 5.0%
- Somewhat 21.7%
- Don't Know 1.7%

With more and more DHSS grant programs moving to Performance Based Outcomes, DHSS expanded this portion of the survey to gather information as to the use of Logic Models by our grantee. (Reminder: Logic Models are not a requirement for programs at this time).

Comments:

- Even though I had had previous Logic Model training, it helped clarify things and provided a time and forum to improve our Logic Model.
- Felt that the model could be modified in order to increase its functionality.

With limited RFP's requiring Logic Models in FY2010, DHSS was pleasantly surprised that grantees acknowledged that the Logic Model training provided over the past year assisted grantees respond to DHSS, RFP's.

- Yes 14.3%
- No 14.3%
- Somewhat 5.2%
- Don't Know 66.2%

Comments:

- We have used the logic model in our proposals. However, the RFP's to which we responded did not request or require a logic model approach.

Those grantee that were successful in receiving a grant that required a Logic Model: (Based on 92 surveyors who answered the question).

- Yes 40.2%
- No 5.4%

- N/A 54.3%

It is clear that only 45.7% of the surveyors actually submitted a grant application to DHSS that required a Logic Model. Although these numbers are low, DHSS did not solicit very many programs where a Logic Model was required in FY2010.

Comments:

- Success was not necessarily directed related to logic model training.

IV. Grantee Partnership Efforts:

Building grantee partnerships is a key component of this project. One platform DHSS is using to form partnerships with grantees is to include grantees and other non-profit organizations in future program development, which includes identifying methods of providing direct services delivery, service locations, target populations, appropriate outcomes, and indicators of success.

Although a new concept for DHSS, surveyed grantees acknowledge some success in partnering with grantees. Of the 92 surveyors who answered the question; did DHSS partner with your agency during the implementation of Logic Models into your DHSS program?

- Yes 8.6%
- No 29.0%
- Somewhat 5.4%
- Don't Know 57.0%

Again, the number of programs where DHSS required performance outcomes through a Logic Model was very low. As DHSS becomes more familiar with performance based outcomes through a Logic Model, we expect these percentages to increase dramatically.

Comments:

- I'm not sure how answer this one. If this means consulting with DHSS staff in developing activities, than the answer is yes, if it means them kicking in additional funds to supplement our existing approved program than I'd have to probably say no. If it means they've funded our proposal than the answer is also yes.
- DBH staff communicates with and assures the Logic Model is implemented.

During the implementation of Logic Models, did you feel it was a true partnership effort? (14 survey responses)

- Yes 21.4%
- No 14.3
- Somewhat 50.0%
- Don't Know 14.3%

Comments:

- Yes, very much so and hope it will continue to assure its success serving the needs of this area.
- I still don't understand the logic model process for this very complicated grant.

What more could DHSS and its partnering grantee do to assist grantees with future Logic Model requirements.

Comments only:

- Provide more training.
- Do some quick refresher classes closer to the time this becomes a requirement.
- Make program managers aware of the model and how it ties to the grants; put it in the grant agreement.
- Would very much appreciate being able to have the training web based
- Provide feedback on Logic Models included in grant proposals.
- Keep up the good work, keep talking to us, and keep the training programs ongoing. It gets to be a challenge to run the program(s) when turnover of CBSSP, or other staff occurs locally.
- Annual or bi-annual training would be helpful for new staff coming on and/or as refresher for existing staff.
- State program staff who currently manages one of our grant programs are not committed to the logic model process.
- Work directly with Tribal Administration.
- Provide more training regarding application of departmental outcomes to agency quality of service.
- I think that some sort of "maintenance" training schedule needs to be maintained. Ours is a high turnover industry and new folks will need the training as they come into the industry.
- Maybe keep rural Alaska in the loop.
- Have program managers assist to suggest improvements or fidelity.
- A TA person that can field questions.
- Online training modules or webinars, breaking it up into smaller pieces, having additional technical assistance from both staff and TA contractors.
- Offer more sessions a year.
- Keep forms consistent, while giving each community the latitude to make creative changes that reflect their specific community needs.
- I believe the Logic Model is an excellent tool and think it should be utilized by all entities to have them focus on their objectives and goals.
- Establish system of paid peer mentors to assist organizations struggling with this requirement.

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- Continue to educate us and train us on what exactly it is, how it pertains to each grantee. One training on the matter a few months ago doesn't really lend itself to becoming a fully understood program.
- Doing a great job.
- Continue to provide regular trainings because so many social staff turnover in agencies.

In review of the comments above and others not identified in this summary, the clear message from grantees was more training, technical assistance, and continued partnership with DHSS staff to identify appropriate outcomes. Online training was also high on the comment list, while access to this training during the solicitation period, and feedback from DHSS on Logic Models submitted in proposals was also mentioned a number of times.

V. Assessment of Overall Grant Making:

In addition to questions about the Grantee Partnership Project, grantees were asked to evaluate a number of aspects of overall DHSS grantmaking practices. In general, responses to this question were also favorable. The following questions were asked in an earlier survey for FY2008; both outcomes will be provided for comparison.

RFP Process	FY2008	FY2009
• Successful	31.53%	50.4%
• Somewhat effective	36.27%	32.4%
• Not effective	6.44%	7.9%
• Don't know	25.76%	9.4%

Grants and Contracts are continually working to improve the solicitation process as you can see by the 18.87% increase in satisfaction by grantees. This is a huge increase, which can be contributed to the ongoing efforts of the grants and contract leadership and seasoned staff. Grants and Contracts faced great staffing issues over a year ago and have since address those issues. Grants and Contract has seen very little turnover in staff, resulting in trained competent staff with an outstanding knowledge base that supports DHSS Program staff as well as grantees.

Program Manager Knowledge	FY2008	FY2009
• Successful	50.51%	63.1%
• Somewhat effective	26.28%	24.1%
• Not effective	3.75%	7.9%
• Don't know	19.45%	9.9%

Ongoing efforts to train all DHSS Program Managers have made a tremendous impact within DHSS. Program staff feels more confident when working with other DHSS staff and especially their grantees. Having knowledge on how to manage a program and understanding the grant process, procurement rules, and what program management truly entails was very important to DHSS. With knowledge comes confidence, which gives DHSS staff the ability to make decision without seeking advice from others. As DHSS continues with its efforts to implement outcomes

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into its programs, DHSS Program Managers will be at the forefront and continue to improve their knowledge and gain even more confidence in managing and supporting grantees.

Grant Administrators Knowledge	FY2008	FY2009
• Successful	54.76%	73.0%
• Somewhat effective	27.21%	19.1%
• Not effective	3.06%	1.4%
• Don't know	14.97%	6.4%

As identified earlier in this survey, the Grants and Contract Support Team has done an excellent job maintain and training their staff. Having seasoned staff to support both DHSS staff and grantees is a key component to the success of DHSS's grant managing ability.

Communication between DHSS Staff (PM & GA) and Grantees	FY2008	FY2009
• Successful	35.84%	56.8%
• Somewhat effective	43.34%	30.2%
• Not effective	7.85%	2.45%
• Don't know	12.97%	10.55%

Increasing communications between DHSS staff (GA & PM) and our grantee partners has made giant leaps over the past year. Ongoing Logic Model efforts have brought DHSS and grantees together to work on program related issues. Giving grantees a mechanism to provide input regarding a DHSS funded program was always a tricky thing to manage. As DHSS Program Managers and Grants Administrators form tighter working relationships with one another, efforts to communicate with grantees grow easier and more accurate. Understand the roll of each position has proven to be a key component to the increased communication effort DHSS is seeing today.

Working as a united front within the Department continues to be a priority for this project. Ongoing efforts have resulted in better communications with our grantees, DHSS staff, and other community partners.

It is not only the way we communicate with grantees but the consistent message DHSS communicate. As we move further into improving the management style and processes for grant management and procurement, communicating between all entities will become less perplexing and easier for everyone to clearly understand. This effort has also been seen as a great success for DHSS's internal communications.

Technical Program Assistance (PM & GA)	FY2008	FY2009
• Successful	43.88%	56.8%
• Somewhat effective	30.27%	24.3%
• Not effective	9.18%	6.7%

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- Don't know 16.67% 9.85%

As DHSS continues to train Program Managers, Administrative Managers, and Grants Administrators, it is expected that each of these positions will be able to provide in depth technical assistance regarding the programs they manage or administer. Knowing when to provide the technical assistance is important for the success of DHSS and our grantee partners. With efforts to develop the GPP, "EVENTS" SharePoint site, it is planned that DHSS will have a tool that will allow all DHSS staff to identify when other DHSS staff will be conducting meetings, on-site reviews, or program audits. In doing so, it is planned that Program Managers will coordinate efforts to review and assist other staff members provide technical assistance and/or feedback to each other regarding one another's programs. This effort will assist staff in identifying whether a grantee is in need of technical assistance.

Comments:

- Program Managers are knowledgeable, but they always seem to be waiting for someone higher up to make decisions or to find out when for example an RFP is going to go out.
- More staff is needed for your Contracts and Grants staff.
- In my experience, DHSS works with us as a partner, and in support of our program.
- As president, although I feel I do not know as much of the technical things of the grants, I see very good results locally, and the funds are invaluable to with regards to operating a program or not operating one.
- FY2005-2007 Grant Period we had a turnover in program managers in both sites (local level and State level). Grant Administrators were very helpful in the financial reports and obligations.
- RFP's were extremely late this grant cycle which made it very difficult for grantees and the state.
- It has been difficult to get all parties on the same page -- and getting LIBR and other things done has been difficult -- though I do think things are improving. It is also not possible to spend exactly 25% of the grants each quarter as expenses don't always line out that way.
- Some of the clarifications were received after the end of the comment period resulting in an inability to seek further clarification. Additionally, consider eliminating the PEC as currently formatted.
- I always find the help needed from my grant admin and program manager.
- The Program managers are excellent about getting resolutions to misunderstood issues.

Payments

Grants and Contracts have established a sound process that ensures payments are made within 25days of receipt of the complete approved report. DHSS new P&P will ensure prompt payment. Were payments timely? (144 surveyed)

- Yes 70.8%
- No 8.3%

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- Don't Know 20.8%

Was there good communication between DHSS and Grantees about DHSS Priorities? (142 surveyed)

- Yes 67.6%
- No 13.4%
- Don't Know 19.0%

Final questions, comments, and suggestions received from grantees.

- We wouldn't be in business if the state didn't have our back! But we are underfunded across all services; which creates a hardship at the local level of extending affordable and cost effective programs. We would love to apply for the senior in home grant but the allocations are so low, that we can't afford to run the program in our small town. The state needs to increase the allocations to HCB services for seniors, which would save the state hundreds of dollars of Medicaid spent in long term care.
- If you mean DHSS priorities for this project, yes I've seen them in the Streamline. It would be nice to get a little more information on how they intend to implement those priorities. If you are talking about other DHSS priorities, no.
- Yes, communication is good. I've enjoyed a few of the statewide suicide prevention trainings and look forward to more at the end of Sept.
- Payments weren't timely because progress reports are chronically turned in late, thereby holding up the payment process on the DHSS side.
- Communication is one-sided (them telling us what to do). Grantee opinions are not respected.
- FY 2005-2007 with the new system in place, I have seen great progress: deadlines met, quick response, effective work management, open communications and quick alerts. Thank you.....
- I think sometimes changes are made too late for grantees to respond well. We haven't gathered the information and all of sudden at the end of a quarter or year, we're asked to report on it.
- Having a planning process that includes effectiveness of the services as a system would be helpful.
- Thanks for keeping in close contact with our grant staff. Being available to answer their questions and to listen to their concerns is very helpful. Certainly appreciated.